
◆ Little Theatre News ◆

Bournemouth (Issue #5)

Playgoers Edition

Tuesday, 3 February 1998

"A Doll's House"

A drama by Henrik Ibsen

Brand-new version, on stage at BLTC, Jameson Road, Winton from Monday, 23 to Saturday, 28 February

To book for show see bottom of this page

The Club is proud to announce that playwright Frank McGuinness has agreed that we are to be the first amateur group to perform his splendid new version of Henrik Ibsen's famous classic. At first we were told by his agents that his modern reconstruction, which gives fresh insights relevant to our own times, was not available for amateurs. Director Barbara Warde would not take "no" for an answer. Mr McGuinness, busy working at the National Theatre, was finally reached and persuaded that we should be given our chance to show what amateurs can do.

The theme of the play is as follows:

Nora Helmer, wife to Torvald and mother of three children, appears to enjoy living the life of a pampered, indulged child. But as her economic dependence becomes brutally clear, Nora's acceptance of the status quo undergoes a profound change. To the horror of the bewildered Torvald, himself caught in the tight web of a conservative society which demands that he exert strict control, Nora comes to see that the only possible true

course of action is to leave the family home.

Ibsen's classic play was greeted with shock on its first production in 1879, with both its style and subject matter being seen as radical and subversive. One critic at the time wrote, "With the slamming of the door behind Nora, the theatres of Europe woke up."

Frank McGuinness's lucid version of *A Doll's House* received its West End première in October 1996, when it was widely acclaimed for the insights which it gives to a new generation of playgoers.

Barbara says, "Despite the still current tendency to see *A Doll's House* as a 'feminist' play, Ibsen himself insisted that it was equally a call to men, as well as women, to discover their true selves and shed the shackles of bourgeois society. Frank McGuinness underlines Ibsen's message with clarity and vigour, breathing new life into a great play." She admits that this just her own opinion, and looks forward to having yours in February.



The Cast

Jane Wright as *Nora Helmer*
Alan Jarvis as *Torvald Helmer*
Jan Fox as *Kristine Linde*
Lee Payton as *Nils Krogstad*
Derek Hyder as *Dr Rank*
Karen Evans as *Helene*
Pat Richardson as *Anne-Marie*

For more details about the cast and the director, Barbara Warde, please turn over the page.

How to book for "A Doll's House"

1. By telephone:

- From Monday, 9 February to Friday, 13 February between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m., please call Sue Hyder at her home, on 424640
- From Monday, 16 February to Friday, 20 February between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m., please call Sue Hyder at the Club on 513361, OR

2. Come in person to the Club from Monday, 16 February to Friday, 20 February, between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m., OR

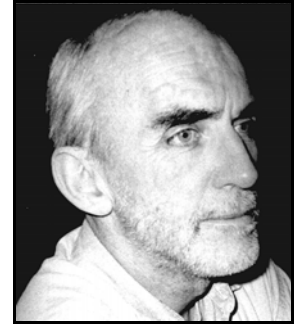
3. Book by post, to BLTC, 11, Jameson Road, Winton, Bournemouth BH9 2QD, enclosing payment, and SAE for reply.

AND REMEMBER payment for telephone bookings must be received in full within 48 hours of booking or seats



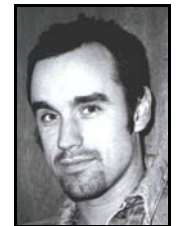
Jane Wright comes to the rôle of Nora, with, she says, a feeling of humility, never having played Ibsen before. She has a wealth of experience in the theatre, having started out with Kinson Community Theatre for whom she played many rôles, including the lead in *Accrington Pals*. She later became a founding member of the Footlights Company, where her favourite part was Evie in *The Gingerbread Lady*, although she was also acclaimed for her accomplished performance of the lead in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Her most recent outing was for BLTC in *The Norman Conquests*, directed by Barbara Warde. Jane is also the holder of no less than three *Echo* Curtain Call Awards, for best actress in a comedy, *California Suite*, for best actress in a drama, *The Shadow Box*, and best actress in a play, *Room 504*.

Alan Jarvis makes a welcome return to BLTC, having been a member for 25 years before moving on in 1993 to develop live theatre at the refurbished Tivoli Theatre at Wimborne. He is no stranger to Ibsen, having starred as Solness in *The Master Builder*. Among very many performances, highlights include the leads in light plays such as *Bedroom Farce*, and *Dry Rot*, and serious drama such as *Gas Light*. For BLTC he has many credits as a director. His successes include *The Caretaker*, *Bond's Lear*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Equus* and *The Dresser*. For Brownsea Open Air Theatre he has performed Shakespeare in rôles as Dogberry, Caliban, Jacques and Iago, and he has directed *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Most recently he has appeared with great success for ImpAct Theatre as Willy Loman in *The Death of a Salesman*.



Jan Fox has appeared in leading rôles at BLTC in "Dial M For Murder", "All my Sons" and "Time and the Conways", but got her Curtain Call Award as best actress in a drama for Castlw Players in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. She only commenced an acting career in 1991, when she played four parts in Balloon Theatre's "Daisy Pulls It Off". Since then she has appeared in Ireland and in Florida in "An Inspector Calls", and has also appeared for ImpAct Theatre in "Death of a Salesman". Most recently she has been Lady Macduff in *Macbeth* on Brownsea Island, and a lead in *No Way Out*, for Castle Players.

Lee Payton played the young RAF boy in **BLTC's** *Time and the Conways*, the sneaky murderer in *Rope*, the young police detective in *Murder by the Board*, a somewhat wounded young man in *A Lie of the Mind*, and recently starred to great effect as McMurphy in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. He has also performed in *The Winter's Tale* on Brownsea.



Derek Hyder, having spent 30 years with BLTC as one of our leading actors, needs little introduction to playgoers. He has played leading rôles for us in Bournemouth, Dundalk, Ireland, Des Moines, Iowa, Florida, and the Netherlands Antilles. At The Dundalk Festival he has been voted best actor three times, and has two Curtain Call Awards, as best actor in 1993, and best supporting actor in 1997. He appeared for us earlier this season in *The Sisters Rosensweig*.

Karen Evans is launching herself on stage for the very first time. She appeared, like manna from Heaven earlier this season, when we suddenly found ourselves short of a sound operator. Despite never having operated sound before, she took over the job successfully. Please welcome her new venture on stage.



Pat Richardson played for Balloon Theatre for 14 years. She has also played for Ferndown Drama Group, where she played in *Steel Magnolias* and where Barbara Warde directed her in *This Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*. Recently she appeared in *The Glass Menagerie* for ImpAct Theatre.

Barbara Warde, the director of *A Doll's House*, has had a distinguished career both as actress and director. She played Desdemona in *Othello* and Ruth in *Blithe Spirit* for Hamble Players, Raina in *Arms and the Man* for the Wayfarers, and began directing. She has been with BLTC since 1984. She played Maggie in *Hobson's Choice* opposite Alan Jarvis and the lead in *The House of Bernada Alba*. As director for us she took *Danger Memory* to the Dundalk Festival, and it was voted best play. For her production of *An Inspector Calls*, she was nominated as best director, and Derek Hyder was voted best actor. The play was subsequently invited to Lake Worth, Florida. As an actress, she is proud that in the first year of the Curtain Call Awards, she was voted best actress for her rôle in BLTC's *All My Sons*.



'Sister George' Wows critics

The sad news is that Sarah Ford, theatre doyenne of the *Daily Echo*, is leaving the paper after nearly 30 years to take up residence in London. The good news is that in what is her last critique of a BLTC show, she was able to bestow praise on *The Killing of Sister George*. She told her readers about this tale of a failing radio soap star, which, she says, "makes for touching and often amusing watching." She continues, "Director Andrew Whyatt has assembled a strong cast. Yvette Leahy is superb as Sister George, flitting in and out of her 'soap' character. Rachael De Courcy Beamish is a perfect foil for her as Alice, the downtrodden 'child-woman' ... Angela Whyatt as Mercy Croft, the BBC's 'hit-woman', delivers Sister George's death warrant, and Elsa Jacobs is perfectly cast as the rather dotty neighbouring clairvoyant, Madame Xenia. With many twists and turns along the way, this is a play to savour."



Yvette Leahy

in a wistful mood onstage.

Rachael De Courcy Beamish

looking for a brighter future



Angela Whyatt

She's smiling - but what is she hiding?

Elsa Jacobs

Not your average neighbour!
Welcome back, Elsa



The Studio is reborn

We re-launched the old studio idea last October, under the guidance of David Weeks. It was greeted with much enthusiasm, with anything up to 25 people attending since then virtually every Wednesday evening at 7.30 p.m. Most of those attending were new to the Club. Some had never been on a stage before. A few were already members of the Club. Others came along to see if it was what they were looking for. David gave educational talks. But, alas, as stated elsewhere, he has since resigned, and the good work was taken up jointly by Jack Snell and Jena Killingback. The bar area was used for discussion purposes, and on a number of occasions, the Studio members divided up into small groups to attempt improvisational work on the stage. Gradually, those who remained, about 15 in number, were 'persuaded' to put on two one-act plays. These were chosen by Jack and Jena. The first is called *Audition For a Writer*, a modern play of some complexity, which draws its theme from Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. The second play is a howlingly funny farce, *Last Tango in Little Dibley*. It commences at the Annual General Meeting of what is undoubtedly the most dysfunctional village amateur drama group in England. We will, no doubt, all recognise situations and (ahem!) human frailties common in other drama groups (not ours, of course). The plays will be presented on Thursday to Saturday, 30 April to 2 May. Any members who want to help out will be welcome - any Wednesday.

AUDITION

Jack Snell (now where have I heard that name before) is re-auditioning his favourite one-act play

The Donahue Sisters

by

Geraldine Aron

This is an Irish drama about three sisters, aged roughly 30, 40 and 45. Jack says that one of them has to be 'plump'. There are only the three female rôles. There will be a playreading on Friday, 6 March, at 7.30 p.m. The auditions will be on Friday, 13 March from 7.30 p.m.

It is intended that this play will be performed at the Club later in the season on the same bill in Bournemouth as *The Collection* by Harold Pinter. The latter one-acter is, of course, our entry in the International One-Act Theater Festival in Michigan, where it will be performed after we have seen it at home.

Jack also has the intention and hope that *The Donahue Sisters* can be entered in festivals once it has joined our repertoire.

Take-over

Linda Kirkman has assumed the work of Sarah Ford at the *Daily Echo*. She says Curtain Call will revert to Fridays only, but reviews will appear as soon as possible after the show is seen.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

This time, it is the turn of Barbara Warde, director of *A Doll's House*, to answer our questions to her. We asked:

1. What is your idea of perfect happiness?

To find a wardrobe mistress (Help!)

2. What is your greatest fear?

Failure (ouch!)

3. Which famous person do you admire?

Jenny Pitman (the racehorse trainer)

4. Who is your favourite film star?

Daniel Day Lewis

5. Who is your favourite actor or actress?

Maggie Smith

6. What is your greatest extravagance?

Estée Lauder

7. What do you always carry on you?

I usually wear a watch

8. Where would you most like to live?

Somewhere rural, near the sea

9. What is your most unappealing habit?

Nagging smokers

10. What is your favourite smell?

New mown hay

11. What is your favourite word?

Welcome!

12. What is your favourite play or film?

At the moment *A Doll's House*, of course

13. What is your favourite journey?

To the theatre — any theatre

14. What do you dislike most?

Traffic jams

15. What is your greatest regret?

The latest missed opportunity

16. When and where were you happiest?

At Pony Club Camp in my 'teens'

17. What single thing which would improve your quality of life?

To stop worrying

18. How do you relax?

A massage is best but usually, walk, garden or lie in the sun (when there is any)

19. What is your favourite quality in others?

Optimism

20. What is your favourite animal?

The horse

Daphne Orman



As most active members of the Club will be aware, Daphne died on 19 December last. Despite her long illness, the end was unexpected. However, she passed away peacefully. She is terribly missed both by her son John, and by me. She was my best friend, I loved her, and always will.

Daphne loved people, and animals and flowers. Though ill, she was full of warmth and happiness.

She was nuts about quizzes and she took great pride in producing one for our November issue. I have just come across a list of questions and answers she had prepared. It seemed a shame to waste them so I have put them underneath for your entertainment. And the photo? That was us, when we lived in Bermuda, hamming for the camera. She would not go on stage, but she managed our box office there for 56 productions.

I would like to thank the Committee of BLTC whose members gave me much immediate support and who continue to do so.

Tony Orman

Theatre Quiz by Daphne Orman

Answers across this page

1. Broadway producer of *Fanny* (1954) and 70 more, especially imports from UK. Who?
2. "I'm only a beer teetotaller, not a champagne teetotaller." Play and author?
3. "I will make a Star-Chamber matter of it." Character, play and author?
4. Who wrote *The Inspector General*?
5. In which city was the Garrick Theatre (1890 to 1932)?
6. Which theatre built in 1663 is famous for musicals?
7. Which US actor won a Tony for the title rôle in *Mister Roberts* (1948)?
8. Who wrote *The Entertainer*?
9. He has had more smash hits on Broadway than any other American playwright. Who?
10. Who was the original Dolly in *Hello Dolly*?

Urgent AUDITION

For technical reasons, Lin Denning has been obliged to withdraw *Noises Off*. Instead, she is looking for a **Quality Quartet** consisting of one couple aged 20s to 30ish. The second couple aged 40s to 50s, to appear in

Relatively Speaking

by Alan Ayckbourn.

The audition will be held from 7.30 p.m. on Friday, 6 February. The play will run from Monday, 20 April to Saturday, 25 April. It is a straightforward classic comedy, and it has the standard litany of deception, confusion and crossed wires!

Resignation

With regret, we announce the resignation of David Weeks from the positions of Chairman and Committee member, for personal reasons. We do hope that he may find time to be able to remain an active member of the Club, and it almost goes without saying that we are enormously grateful for the tremendous hard work he has devoted to the physical development of the Club, and for his enthusiastic and expert advice, counsel and support for all the Club's new activities.

Until the end of the season, Andrew Whyatt will act as Chairman.

Reminders

Dates to remember for the upcoming few months include:

- Fri. 6 Feb.** Auditions for *Relatively Speaking*.
Mon. 23 - Sat 28 Feb. Performances of *A Doll's House*.
Fri. 6 March. Auditions for *The Donahue Sisters*.
Wed. 25 March. Meeting to consider next year's shows.
(March, Mondays to Fridays, rehearsals every night for *Relatively Speaking* or for Studio production.)
Fri. 3 April. Playreading of *Grand National Night*.
Fri. 10 April. Auditions for *Grand National Night*.
Mon. 20 - Sat 25 April. Performances of *Relatively Speaking*.
Thurs. 30 April - Sat. 2 May. Performances of Studio production. (see article page 3).
Mon. 8 - Sat. 13 June. Performances of *Grand National Night*.
All shows start at 7.45 p.m. All meetings or auditions start at 7.30 p.m.

And NOW, folks!

It's that time of year again when we have to start planning our next season, even though we haven't finished this one yet! Any director who would like to put forward a play for next season is asked to do so at a meeting to be held at the Club on Wednesday, 25 March, at 7.30 p.m. Any members who have ideas for plays but do not wish to direct may put their suggestions to any member of the Committee before the above date.

In choosing our season of plays, many factors have to be considered. We must present a balanced programme which our audience will want to come and see. It must be possible for us to cast and stage the play chosen and, of course, a director must want to do it. So please come forward with your suggestions. If you want to discuss them with anyone, please contact **Andrew Whyatt** on **624221**, or come to the meeting. These are exciting times for the Club. Be a part of them!

Hands across the sea

Do you recall when the performers from the Des Moines Playhouse entertained us so hugely at the Pier Theatre in May 1994 with the Bible thumping comic-religious musical *Smoke On The Mountain*? The Playhouse is, of course, an amateur group from Des Moines, Iowa. What they call 'community theater'. We provided front-of-house staff and hosted their group. Well, that was just one half of an agreed exchange programme. Now they have invited us to go and perform in their town in June or July 1999. We will choose a very English play to take over and it will be the last play of next season here in Winton. Anyone who is interested in going to the US on this trip should contact Andrew Whyatt on 624221. But please remember: you have to pay your own air-fare. One week's free housing is provided by Des Moines players.

1. David Merrick.
2. *Candida* by George Bernard Shaw.
3. Shallow, opening speech of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare.
4. Nikolai Gogol.
5. New York.
6. Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.
7. Henry Fonda.
8. John Osborne.
9. Neil Simon.
10. Ethel Merman.